

Tribute

Nawab Mushtaq Ahmad Khan 1903-2005

The name of Nawab Mushtaq may not be known to many of the educated adults of today but in his prime he was a most versatile personality who rendered tremendous services to Pakistan right from its inception.

Nawab Mushtaq was descended from the Lodhi branch of Pakhtuns who had long settled in Jullundhar [East Punjab – now in India]. His father, Fakhruddin Ahmad attracted the notice of the Nizam, Mir Osman Ali Khan, ruler of Hyderabad Deccan a state which was of the size of France. By virtue of his abilities and talent, Fakhruddin Ahmad rose to become the Finance Minister of Hyderabad Deccan with the title, Fakhr Yar Jung. When he was Finance Minister in Hyderabad, a child was born to him who was given the name Mushtaq Ahmad Khan. This was in 1903.

Mushtaq Ahmad grew up in Hyderabad. He was educated at the newly-established Osmania University. He did so well in his studies that he was awarded a scholarship to pursue advanced studies at Peterhouse College, Cambridge [U.K]. On his return after completing his Tripos in Economics in 1927 Mushtaq Ahmad taught at Aligarh Muslim University. Osman Ali Khan was determined to utilize his talents for the benefit of his state – so he appointed Mushtaq in the Railway Department in Hyderabad Deccan. As the freedom movement gathered momentum, the state of Hyderabad was caught up in a constitutional crisis regarding its position viz. whether to maintain its independence or accede to Pakistan or India. At the time of independence of India and Pakistan, this major issue was unresolved. Observing the unsettled situation, Nawab Osman appointed Mushtaq Sahib as his agent-general [ambassador] to Pakistan. This vital posting indicated the Nizam's confidence in his appointee. Mushtaq Sahib set up a diplomatic presence in Karachi and took charge of his duties. He represented Hyderabad state in Pakistan until the death of Nawab Osman in 1967. The political tangles and diplomatic imbroglios are all vividly described by Mushtaq Sahib in his books – *Zawal-i-Hyderabad ki Ankahi Dastan* [1986] and his delightful autobiography, *Karwan-i-Hayat* [1974] which has a

preface by M. Aslam, the famous Urdu novelist. He also wrote a biography of his father, Nawab Fakhr Yar Jung titled *Hayat-i-Fakhar* [1966] which evokes all the shades of a bygone era. These three books are basic source material for anyone researching into the history of Hyderabad state, the freedom movement in the subcontinent and the struggle of Muslim for freedom. They also contain extremely interesting account of great personalities such as Nawab Bahadur Yar Jung, Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Sir Ali Imam, Sir Reginald Glancy and Qazi Sultan Mahmud – the *pir* of Allama Iqbal [who was also the *Pir* of Fakhr Yar Jung]. A most delightful essay by Mushtaq Sahib is on his wife who predeceased him titled *Meri Rafiq-i-Hayat*. It is brimming with tender affection and appreciation for her many admirable qualities.

Mushtaq Sahib's use of Urdu for all his writing and correspondence was remarkable. He was extremely attached to Urdu and fluent in his expression. All his letters to me were in Urdu whereas I had to use English to reply. He was a graduate of Cambridge University but never felt any inferiority complex in using Urdu. [The letters of Mushtaq Sahib to me have been printed in 'Al Ayyam' Vol.8]. He was a regular correspondent and no doubt his many letters to his various friends, associates and contemporaries are worthy of collection and publication.

On his hundredth birthday in 2003, his family arranged a celebration in Karachi. It was my good fortune to attend this memorable event along with Dr Syed Jaffar Ahmed and Dr Moinuddin Aqeel. Although advised to live in Karachi, Mushtaq Sahib lived alone in Awanpur Sharif - a village 20 miles from Lahore. The reason for this was that Pir Qazi Sultan Mahmud [q.v.] was buried there and Mushtaq Sahib could not live away from such spiritually eminent personality although he [Qazi Sahib] had passed away over 60 years before.

With the demise of Mushtaq Sahib in 2005, it was truly 'the end of an era' [a term used by K.M. Munshi to describe the end of Hyderabad state]. His family was bereaved and his numerous admirers shattered. The lines of the Arab poet came to mind:

Ma Kana Qayun Halakahu Halakun Wahid-walakinnahu
Bunyano Qaumin Tahaddima.

Translation:

The death of Qays is not the death of an individual-Nay! The
foundations of the nation have collapsed.